

Response: Thank you for your submission.

Comment Submitted By: Sara Edwards, Board President of DeBerry WSC, DeBerry, Texas Additional Authors/Contributors: None

Comment Date: July 16, 2026 Comment: Dear Members of the Board

On behalf of DeBerry Water Supply Corporation, a nonprofit Water Supply Corporation organized under Chapter 67 of the Texas Water Code and serving members in Panola County, I am submitting the following comments on the Texas Water Supply Corporation Grants Implementation Plan dated June 18, 2026, during the public comment period open through July 17, 2026.

1. The scoring criteria should account for pending or disputed Annual Median Household

Income (AMHI) determinations. The Recommendation section's project prioritization criteria award points to retail water providers based solely on the formula $(76,292 \div \text{AMHI}) \times 10$, using the applicant's Service Area's Annual Median Household Income. As written, the plan provides no mechanism for an applicant whose AMHI figure is under active dispute, or who has been approved to complete a new TWDB-approved socioeconomic survey, to have a corrected or updated figure considered before or during scoring. DeBerry WSC currently falls into this category. We have been approved to dispute our AMHI and to complete a new TWDB-approved socioeconomic survey, but there is no assurance that this process will conclude before the January 13, 2027 application deadline. Under the plan as drafted, an applicant in our position would be scored, and very likely eliminated from consideration, using an outdated AMHI figure that does not reflect the community's actual economic circumstances, through no fault of the applicant and for reasons entirely outside its control. With only \$50 million available and a stated cap of at least ten projects, an inaccurate AMHI figure is not a minor scoring inconvenience; it can be the difference between an eligible, deserving system being funded or shut out entirely.

We respectfully request that the Board add a defined process allowing:

- an applicant with a pending, TWDB-approved socioeconomic survey to submit a revised AMHI figure if the survey is finalized before the application deadline; or, at minimum,
- a short cure period after the January 13, 2027 deadline during which an applicant with a documented, pending AMHI dispute may submit updated survey results for use in scoring.

2. The scoring criteria should give weight to documented system need, not income and population alone. Beyond the 10 points available for a project being "ready to proceed," the entirety of the proposed prioritization criteria is based on AMHI or population served. The program's own Key Issues and Program Eligibility sections describe a purpose centered on water infrastructure need: addressing real or apparent water loss, TCEQ violations, and aging or failing systems. The scoring criteria as proposed do not reflect that purpose. A system with documented TCEQ violations, an aging or failing well, or high measured water loss receives no additional priority over a system that is simply low-income with no such documented deficiencies.

We request that the Board add a scoring factor tied to documented infrastructure need, such as active TCEQ violations, water loss audit results, or engineering findings of imminent system failure, so that the limited funding available is directed toward the systems facing the most urgent, demonstrable need, consistent with the program's stated purpose.

3. The AMHI-based point formula should include a stated cap. The formula $(76,292 \div \text{AMHI}) \times 10$ has no stated maximum. For applicants with a very low AMHI, this formula can generate a score that dwarfs the 10 points available for readiness, effectively making AMHI the sole determinative factor in the ranking. We request that the Board clarify whether a cap applies and, if not, consider adopting one so that no single factor can overwhelm the overall prioritization. We appreciate the Board's efforts to direct this funding toward Texas's rural water systems and ask that these comments be considered before the plan is finalized.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed \$5 million funding cap per project outlined in the implementation plan?

I do not disagree with the funding cap.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed question for determining whether a Water Supply Corporation primarily serves industrial or commercial connections.

N/A

Do you have any additional recommendations or alternative approaches regarding the TWDB's proposal for distributing the appropriated funds?

DeBerry WSC was recently selected for the USDA ECWAG grant, a process that required extensive documentation proving dire need. We were awarded \$999,999.00, but as TWDB is aware from its history working with Water Supply Corporations, an award of this size covers only a portion of what a system in our position actually requires. The same documentation that demonstrated to USDA how imminent our risk of water loss is should be equally relevant to a TWDB funding decision. For this reason, we disagree with using AMHI as the determining factor in project prioritization.

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